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ABSTRACT

Part 4 of a 6-part series of pamphlets contains anecdotes of a vocational agriculture teacher's (who was also a State supervisor) experiences in the area of problems of relationships. The eight stories, based on actual happenings, illustrate relationships with students, with school administrators, with teachers, and with parents and relatives. The anecdotes are directed toward use in both in-service and pre-service vocational agriculture teacher education with questions at the conclusion of each story to prompt discussion and alternative solutions. (JB)

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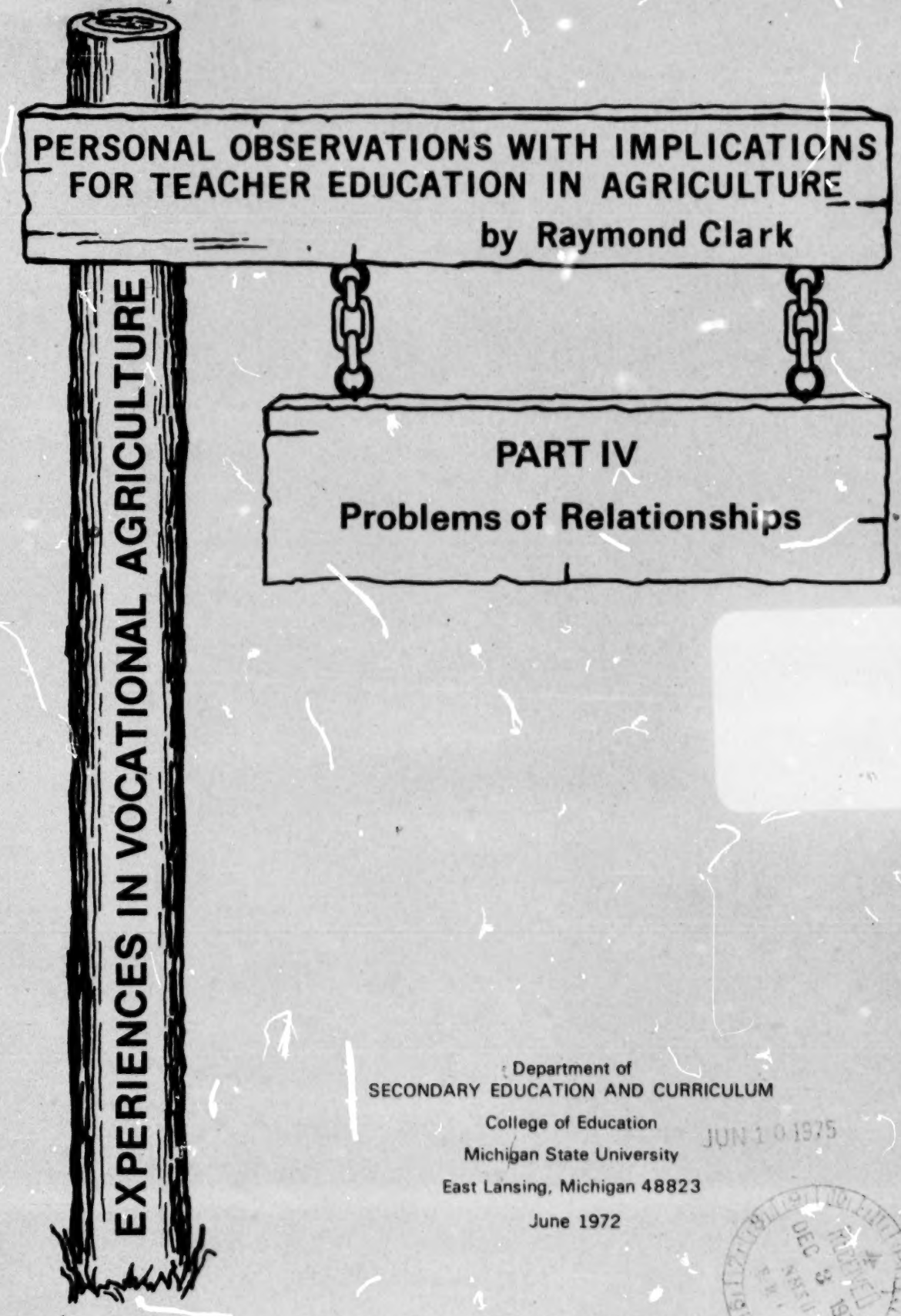

PERSONAL OBSERVATIONS WITH IMPLICATIONS FOR TEACHER EDUCATION IN AGRICULTURE

by Raymond Clark

PART IV

Problems of Relationships

Department of
SECONDARY EDUCATION AND CURRICULUM
College of Education
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EXPERIENCES IN VOCATIONAL AGRICULTURAL EDUCATION

Part IV
Problems of Relationships

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Secondary Education and Curriculum
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East Lansing, Michigan 48823

June, 1972

Foreword

This is one of a series of pamphlets dealing with several aspects of the program of vocational agriculture. Each pamphlet consists of a series of events and happenings as they actually occurred. Each is a true story and it describes an actual experience which I have had during the past forty-five years in the vocational agriculture field. Many of the experiences described here are those which I had while I was a teacher of vocational agriculture. Others describe experiences as a teacher-educator or as a state supervisor of vocational education in agriculture.

These stories of events and happenings may be used by many different persons. (1) By students to discover the nature of some of the work of the teacher of vocational agriculture. Some who read these stories may become more determined to enter the profession. Others may decide to find other fields of work. (2) By student teachers who may read these stories as they find themselves confronted with similar experiences or problems. We may be able to share experiences through the medium of these pages. Some ideas may be found to help smooth out rough spots for student teachers. I hope they will be able to discover other solutions to problems and other methods which will be of value to them. (3) By my colleagues in vocational agriculture. They may find a few new suggestions; they are likely to discover that we have had similar problems; and, I feel certain that they will be in a position to say, "That reminds me of an experience I had _ _ _ _ _."

In presenting this series of anecdotes, it is recognized that they reflect the objectives of "establishment in farming" and "developing agricultural leadership" which were accepted at the time they were written. Teachers in service and those who are preparing for teaching may ask themselves, "How would I meet similar situations today?" "What new or different solutions would I need to use to meet similar situations with students preparing for careers in farming and/or agricultural business?"

While any division of the series of anecdotes results in some overlapping, for the convenience of readers, the anecdotes have been assembled into pamphlets under the following titles:

1. Teaching High School Students
2. Future Farmers Programs
3. Post-High School Farmer Training Programs
   A. Young-Farmer Programs
   B. Adult-Farmer Programs
4. Problems of Relationship
5. Program Planning
6. Student Teachers

Students preparing to teach vocational agriculture will find in these anecdotes examples of many typical problems faced by teachers of agriculture. It is hoped that these problems will help students visualize real situations as they work through the professional education courses required for certification, and as they consider the subject matter of technical agriculture in relation to planning and conducting instructional programs in local schools.

Teachers in-service, who may read these stories, will say, "Let me tell you about a similar experience I had _ _ _ _ _," and "I would have done it differently. I would _ _ _ _ _." In groups of experienced teachers this could lead to spirited discussion and demonstration to emphasize an aspect of method, or application of principle.

Among either pre-service or in-service groups of teachers it is hoped that these experiences and happenings will stimulate teachers to study methods and principles in a realistic and constructive manner.

Raymond M. Clark, Professor Emeritus
Department of Secondary Education and Curriculum
June, 1972

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Problems of Relationship

The anecdotes included in this pamphlet represent only a few of the great variety of relationship problems faced by teachers of vocational agriculture. I feel that they represent the more common things that we encounter. Obviously, personalities influence many aspects of our relationships with others. At the same time, if we are aware of the need for desirable relationship with others and make a sincere effort to conduct a good program we will have gone a long way toward achieving our goals.

Included here are stories illustrating relationships with students, with school administrators, with teachers, and with parents--even with one's wife! With our present day programs of education for agricultural business, we will need to maintain excellent relationship with employers who provide occupational experience for our students and who hire our graduates.

As you read these stories, try to analyze the strengths and weaknesses of the relationship practices of the teacher. Consider such questions as: What could be done to avoid the mistakes? How can one anticipate and avoid problems? Should a teacher prepare a written "public relations plan?"

PROBLEMS OF RELATIONSHIPS

A FATHER EXPLAINS THE PURPOSES OF FARMING PROGRAMS

In the days when I was prepared to teach vocational agriculture, we were told that we should develop "projects" with our boys. It was desirable for every boy in the classes to have a project, but if the school wished to remain on the list to receive reimbursement from vocational funds, at least twelve projects must be reported to the state supervisor annually. I cannot recall that any mention was ever made of the "project" as a teaching device. It might result in a little more interest in agriculture on the part of the student. Students were to be visited once or twice during the summer for the purpose of checking up on the projects and to see if the practices which had been taught in the class were being carried out on the farm.

To many teachers of vocational agriculture, these visits were a requirement to be met rather than an opportunity to do a better job of teaching. We often talked about the "project program" as being a device we might use to help the boy put into practice the things he had learned in the classroom, and besides we "need projects to meet the State and Federal requirement." This idea was quite generally accepted by the parents, but sometimes I felt there was a little reservation on the part of some of them.

One day I was out visiting my "projects" and I stopped at the home of a boy who was in the seventh grade. I liked to get acquainted with boys of this age and with their parents. The boys would soon be students in my department. As often as possible, I got them started with a project so

that they would be well established with a program when they enrolled in high school in vocational agriculture. This particular family was one with whom I was well acquainted. The father had been attending meetings of my adult class. He had always been very helpful to me by helping me to better understand the community.

As we stood in the barn visiting, I suggested that the son ought to be starting a project so he would be well established in project work when he entered high school and so we could do a better job of meeting state requirements.

His reply came quickly, "I don't care about the State requirements and all that red tape stuff. The thing I want my boy in project work for is to help teach him to take responsibility. If he takes a heifer calf and starts a project, he will have to learn that he must get out and feed and take care of it every day. He must learn to be regular in feeding. He must learn that he has the job of raising the calf. When the going gets tough he will have to figure out how to meet the situation, not pass it off on someone else."

I readily agreed that this ought to be an outgrowth of the program. Then he said, "And you have a job to do too. If my boy takes a project, I want you to see that he does a good job. You will have to see that he understands that he has a responsibility to his parents and to you and your department for holding up the standards you have set. He will have to be on the job and see that things are done on time. I'll expect that kind of help from you."

That was a real challenge and I said as much. Then I asked, "Well how are we going to get him started? Will you give him a calf to get started or will we buy one?"

"I'll let him have any heifer calf in the barn, but I want the three of us to get together and work out an agreement on his purchase of the calf. I want this boy of mine to learn that things he gets must be paid for. We must not give him the idea that he can get anything he wants as a gift. Of course we'll make it possible for him to get a good start. I'd like to see him become a State Farmer some day, but we've got to plan this program so the boy will learn something at every step."

We went ahead and worked out the program, and the boy did make good on it as he went through high school. The things that impressed me most, however, were the reactions of the father during this visit and the benefit I received from this discussion with the father. He was well ahead of me in interpretation of our program of vocational agriculture and I felt that I learned more from that visit than I had learned in many previous visits with farm families.

Our concept of farming programs has grown since the time that I made the visit described above and most parents have kept pace with us in our thinking. As teachers of vocational agriculture, we need to appraise our work to make sure we are not too far behind parents of our students in our concept of the purposes of farming programs undertaken by their sons.

* * * *

How could I have used this father to help other boys develop plans for their own farming programs?

What approach might you take when talking with parents who refuse to give their boy any opportunity for ownership of livestock or crops?

SERVICE TO FARMERS OR TEACHING

During the first few years of my teaching experience, our State Supervisor would urge us to, "get out and get acquainted with the farmers. Show them you know how to do things. If they are hauling hay, get in and help. Spend a half-day and show them what you can do."

Just recently I attended a conference with a group of teachers of vocational agriculture and heard one of them ask, "What do you do when a farmer asks you to come out and help him do something like docking lambs?" It seems that the problem of working for farmers, at their request, is still with us. Several other teachers attending this same conference agreed that they also are beset with similar requests.

I would like to relate my own experience in following the advice of my state supervisor and to describe experiences of one or two others for the purpose of pointing out some of the factors we should consider in deciding what to do regarding this problem.

I followed the advice of my state supervisor quite closely. If farmers were threshing (they didn't use combines in those days in my area), when I arrived to visit my students and their farming programs, I helped thresh. If they were making hay, I helped haul hay. I seemed to be getting along very well. My program was well accepted by the farmers and I felt well pleased. I had many friends among these farmers and their sons.

Some of these friends were the kind who would take the trouble to keep me informed of pitfalls which I might be running into before they got too deep. One day, after a busy period of "threshing visits" one of these farmer friends of mine came to town and hunted me up. He said, "Do you know what the farmers are saying about you in our neighborhood?"

I said, "No, what are they saying?"

"They're saying you haven't anything to do during the summer but come out and help us thresh. I tried to tell them why you do it, but they are a little doubtful."

After that I was always pretty busy. When I got to a farm where everyone was very busy and I might have stayed to work, I would say, "Sorry I can't stay and help. I'd like to but I must get over to see _____ and help him with his project." This seemed to satisfy these farmers and they continued to support my program. I believe they gave it even stronger support in the years that followed.

At the recent conference my teacher friend who asked, "What do you do when a farmer asks for help?" was answered by another teacher who related his own experience. His experience was similar to mine except that it involved a skill which the farmer did not have. The teacher had been working with one of his students, teaching him to shear his sheep. A neighbor learned that this teacher could shear sheep so he asked the teacher to come out and shear his flock. This teacher replied, "I will come if you will agree to work with me and learn how yourself."

* * * *

The program of "training for proficiency in farming" is one which involves "organized, systematic instruction in agriculture." Was the work described above eligible to be designated as "organized, systematic instruction?" Could you justify this kind of work by the teacher of vocational agriculture?

Could you justify spending some time on a farm to learn from the farmer a skill you did not have? Why?

A BEGINNING TEACHER HAS PROBLEMS OF RELATIONSHIP

I recently visited a beginning teacher whom I had had as a student teacher. I knew a lot about him before I visited him in this first job. He had been a very outstanding student. He had demonstrated his ability as a student teacher to take the theories of educational method and make them work in the classroom. He could interpret the techniques he used with classes in terms of accepted principles.

I also knew that he had a fine concept of the supervised farming program and of the function of the Future Farmer chapter in the development of a program of vocational agriculture. He knew how and when to use field trips, visual aids, and other devices to provide instruction for his students.

When I arrived at his room, in a rather large high school, located in an excellent farming area of the state, I found a large beginning class. It was well conducted. The students were interested and they were considering worthwhile, practical problems. I felt well pleased. I had expected to find a satisfactory situation and I was not disappointed.

After the class, however, I had an opportunity to visit with the teacher and he had some problems to discuss with me. I want to describe some of them since they involve problems of relationship which I feel teachers of vocational agriculture often fail to recognize.

I asked, "How are things going?"

"Going good, I think I'm getting along OK."

"How many students do you have in all-day classes?"

"Ninety-one. This class that just went out is the biggest. There are thirty-five in it."

"That's a big enrollment. How did you find the situation when you got here?"

"Well, I guess the teacher last year had quite a time. They used to shoot fire crackers in here last year and much of the time the kids would skip down town instead of coming to the agriculture class. They'd get back just at the end of the hour so they could go to their next class."

We talked on for a time about the school and the history of the department of vocational agriculture. Several years previously the Future Farmer Chapter had been one of the outstanding ones in the state. They had had many state farmers and had rated high in the Best Chapter Contest. More recently the department had been on the down grade and I was hoping this new teacher would be able to reverse the trend.

Finally he got around to some of his problems. He said, "It's very hard to take field trips here, not like the training center where I did my student teaching. The superintendent wants me to notify him three days before we take a trip and tell him exactly how long we will be gone, why we are going, and who is going."

I tried to be non-committal and said, "Yes, I suppose so."

He went on, "We wanted to take the agriculture boys out for a regional Future Farmer leadership training program the first week of school and we were not allowed to go."

"How many did you want to take?" I asked.

"Oh, the whole gang--a bus load anyway."

He continued, "Then I wanted to take some of the boys down to the college to the livestock sale to pick up some animals for their farm practice program but we couldn't go."

I could see that this new teacher felt that he was being handicapped by restrictions which he felt were being placed on his program. At the same time I marveled at the good spirit he exhibited. His attitude was not critical toward the administrators of the school. He was determined to do a good job in spite of the restrictions.

I said, "Now put yourself in the position of the superintendent in this school. He sits up there in an office. His only opportunity for success or failure is in terms of the success or failure of his teachers. Whenever something happens in a classroom that the people don't like, he is the first to hear about it. He is held responsible. In the same way he will be considered successful to the degree that his teachers do a good job with their students. I realize he has to think of budgets and buildings but after all he is largely dependent on his teachers for his own success."

"I never thought of it that way before."

I went on, "Think of this department. You have told me how the boys shot off fire crackers down here, how they skipped down town instead of attending class, how no one ever knew where the class was. You told me how they went on field trips without notifying anyone as to their plans.

"Now here is a new teacher just out of college. No one knows just what he can do. Can he handle these problems? Can he keep the boys in class and keep them involved in worthwhile activities? The superintendent doesn't know yet. In the meantime he is going to do everything he can to protect you and to help you protect yourself from pitfalls. Of course, he wouldn't let you take a whole bus load of these boys out for an all-day trip. Of course, he wants to know where and when you are going on field trips. But don't forget that when he finds out that you can handle the situations he will allow you more and more opportunity to do some of the good things you want to do."

The teacher said, "Boy! That helps! I believe you are right too."

We then went to work on planning activities which would help him to build his program in vocational agriculture to acceptable standards. We visited farming programs, we discussed Future Farmer radio programs his chapter was scheduled to write and broadcast. We visited with an English teacher in the school about integrating the radio script work in agriculture with the work in English--but these are simply responsibilities of the teacher in carrying out his part of a relationship in which every teacher and every school administrator is involved.

* * * *

Do you agree with me on the suggestions to the teacher concerning the reasons for restrictions by the superintendent of schools on the teacher of vocational agriculture? Why?

Would you offer other suggestions to this teacher of vocational agriculture which would help him solve his problem of relationship?

Do you believe this teacher was right in refusing to criticise his superintendent of schools?

Do you believe this teacher might have accomplished more by talking about his problems with some leading farmers of the community?

THE TEACHER WHO WASN'T THERE

I called at a school one morning just after classes had begun for the day and went to the superintendent's office to ask permission to see his teacher of vocational agriculture. I had been in the school many times before and I asked, "May I go down and see Bill for a minute?"

The superintendent replied, "Sure he's down in the agriculture room. You know where it is, go right ahead. He has a class this hour so he'll be there." My mission on this particular day was not one of in-service teacher education or of supervision but rather simply to leave a rather voluminous questionnaire which had been developed for gathering data for a regional research study on some phase of vocational education in agriculture.

I went down to the agriculture room and found it empty--no teacher and no students. I looked around the room and found no clues as to where they might be. I had with me on this trip a supervising teacher in our department of teacher-education and I said, "I'll go up to the principal's office on the third floor and see if Bill has gone on a field trip."

At the principal's office I asked, "Do you know where Bill is? I went down to the agriculture room and he isn't there. Is he out on a field trip with his class?"

The secretary said, "No, he couldn't be. If he was we would have a list of the boys who went with him."

"Would he have arranged for a school bus up here?" I asked.

"Yes, he'd have done that too, and we would have a record of where he was going and when he'd be back," she explained.

"Well, maybe he's around," I said and went back down to the first floor and to the agriculture room. But the teacher wasn't there.

We looked around some more and finally decided that we couldn't do anything for the regional research study, besides we had other work to do at the next school so we would be on our way. We didn't want to press our search for the teacher any further as it might result in embarrassment to him with the superintendent and principal.

As we left the school, my colleague said, "Now isn't that a heck of a situation! Just think of all the things that might happen while that teacher is gone that would be a reflection on the department."

"Yes, that's right. It would be bad if a father of one of the boys came in and no one could find the teacher or the son."

"Or if some parent phoned in and asked for a boy out of that class."

"I wonder what would happen in case they had an accident on a trip not approved by the principal. That girl in the principal's office would hardly believe he wasn't down there in the agriculture room."

"Do you think they would be able to sue the teacher and collect damages in a case like that?"

"I don't know. I'm not an expert on the legal aspects of these things, but it would certainly put a teacher on a spot with the school administrators and parents if anything did happen."

"It sure would, and isn't this a vivid illustration of the importance of clearing such matters with the principal whenever we want to leave the classroom or shop with some boys during school hours?"

"Yes and it emphasizes again, to you and me, our own responsibility in training these men. We must get them to see the importance of conforming to school regulations and policies in all of their activities. But I want to remind you that Bill is an excellent teacher. He's far above the average and his superintendent would insist that he is the best he has ever had in his school. He certainly would be surprised if he knew about our experience this morning."

"Yes, I know he's good, that's why I can't get over the fact that he wasn't there."

And so we arrived at the next school after having missed the teacher who wasn't there.

* * * *

Why might a teacher take his students away from the classroom without first making the required arrangements?

THE BETTER HALF

A man's wife probably has more influence on his success or failure than anything else. I have seen men pushed into success as teachers of vocational agriculture by the encouragement of their wives, and I have seen the opposite happen too. Let me tell you about one of these "opposite" cases.

It happened when I was visiting teachers as a state supervisor. I tried to make visits to teachers during the summer when they were able to really devote full-time to teaching vocational agriculture, unhampered by all the routine detail of the school year program.

I arrived at the school and found the superintendent. After the usual greeting, I said, "Where's Bill today. I didn't see him in his room when I came in?"

"My gosh," replied the superintendent. "I forgot to tell him you were coming, but he lives just down this road a mile or two. He's probably home." So I got in the car and drove out to a neat little farm house where the teacher of agriculture lived. I got no response from my knock at the door and was just ready to leave when in drove Bill, the teacher.

He was a happy, extrovert kind of man and he greeted me like a long lost brother with a, "Hello, Ray, gee I'm glad to see you! I didn't know you were coming but I'm sure glad you're here."

I explained that the superintendent had failed to notify him of my announced visit and then asked, "What's going on today?"

"Oh, we're out building tables for the Grange Hall. I just came in after another hammer or two. We're making a bee of it, plan to be out there all day. My wife's out there too. But what are you here for?"

I explained, "We are making some visits to teachers during the summer to try to help with the improvement of farming programs and other activities characteristic of the summer program of teachers."

Bill said, "That's fine. I'll just forget the Grange bee today and we'll get in my car and visit some of my boys. I won't even bother to change my clothes. Let's just get going."

We spent the day visiting the farming programs of many of his students. We talked with the boys and their parents. We planned for the future with some of the boys. I felt we had had a very profitable day. Our discussions in the car between farms had brought about agreement on points in his program which might be improved. I felt I had discovered some new ideas too.

As we drove into the yard of Bill's home on our return, we were met by a very irate wife. As the car door opened, she began, at the top of her voice, "Where in --- have you been? What do you mean going off like that and leaving me locked out of the house?"

Bill tried to interrupt by saying, "I want you to meet Ray Clark. He's the state supervisor."

She stopped only long enough to draw a short breath and said, "Pleased to meet 'cha," and turning to Bill, in the same breath said, "What in hell do you mean going off like that and leaving me out there? x ! / - you old ---!"

I excused myself, shook hands with Bill and drove out of the yard. For half a mile down the road I could still hear Bill's wife swearing and yelling about the injustice heaped on her by her thoughtless husband.

Bill changed schools again the next year. I suppose he is doomed to change about every one or two years as long as he continues to teach.

* * * *

What would you have done differently if you had been Bill? Why?

A SUPERINTENDENT WHO KNOWS WHERE HIS TEACHER SPENDS HIS TIME

One day while I was serving as a state supervisor, I called at a school in a small town in western Michigan. The teacher was a young man who had been out of college only two or three years. Reports from the agriculture department indicated that the program was improving under his direction. The F.F.A. chapter had one or two new State Farmers, the farming programs had improved and the enrollment in agriculture classes seemed to be increasing.

As a result of these reports, I was interested in discovering other evidences of improvement in the program. I wanted to find out if my observations were correct and if this young teacher actually was bringing about improvement in the program in the school.

I stopped first at the superintendent's office and was invited to sit down. We discussed the weather and then I asked, "How are things in the agriculture department?"

"Oh, they're swell!" was the reply.

"That's good," I said, "but what do you mean, they're swell? Is Jim doing an unusually good job of teaching?"

"Well, yes he is," said the superintendent, "and you know he's the first agriculture teacher I ever had who really planned his work."

"You mean he writes out lesson plans?" I asked.

"No, I don't mean that, exactly, but look at this," he said.

As he spoke, he walked over to his office door, closed it, and pointed to two typewritten sheets attached to the door.

"I know where Jim is every hour of the day," said the superintendent. "Here's a copy of his plan for the next two weeks and here's his report for the past two weeks."

I looked more closely and found that the teacher had listed by dates his plans for visiting farming programs of his students during the next two weeks. He had included plans for visiting members of his young-farmer class and of his adult-farmer class as well as of his all-day classes. Also included was the schedule for adult and young-farmer classes, of F.F.A. meetings, and other activites outside the regular school schedule for which the teacher was responsible.

Opposite this plan was the report of the previous two weeks showing visits he had made, mileage, and pertinent data regarding the visit.

I wanted to follow up this lead a little further so I asked, "When did you start requiring this kind of a report from your agriculture teacher?"

"I didn't ask for it, he brought it in and put it there himself. I had nothing to do with it," replied the superintendent.

"You like it?" I asked.

"Yes, I think it's a good idea. It helps me answer questions of the board of education and the other teachers see what he's doing too," answered the superintendent.

"What happens if the report fails to check with the original plan? Does Jim always carry out his plan one hundred per cent?"

"No, he misses once in a while. But when he does, he lets me know the reason. The important thing is that he looks ahead and makes a plan."

I wanted to find out, if I could, just what this superintendent had in mind so I said, "You mean Jim keeps track of his class members and gets around to each one as often as he can, is that what you mean by planning?"

"No, not exactly. I suppose Jim does that but he checks with these people and adjusts his itinerary to try to make visits when they are needed. That way he does a better job of teaching. The folks know when he is going to visit. They know why he is coming and they are able to profit from his visit much more than they otherwise would."

"That's fine. But does Jim ever help these people discover problems for additional study as he makes his visits?"

"Yes, he does. But I'll let him tell you about that part of the program. You'll notice he's got you scheduled for a visit to a couple of farms this afternoon. You can judge for yourself."

So I was ushered to the agriculture room for my visit with Jim.

Needless to say, I found a fine teacher with a good program underway and a teacher with a vision of better work yet to be done. We discussed problems which he had written down in preparation for my visit, we visited farms, and he asked for my comments and criticisms; and we interviewed some F.F.A. members who were aiming at the State Farmer degree next year--but these are other stories.

* * * *

What do you think of the idea of the agriculture teacher bringing in the report to the superintendent without it being asked? Was it a waste of time?

What do you believe was the effect of the teacher of making out the plan and the report afterward?

Could the teacher have spent his time to better advantage than in making out these reports? How?

A TEACHER WHO HAD NO NEED FOR A TEACHER EDUCATOR

Most of us like to talk about our successes. It gives us a pleasant feeling of accomplishment to be able to feel that we have helped someone over a rough spot. As teacher educators, I feel that we often ask ourselves as we leave a school following a visit, "What did I do to help that teacher? Was this visit worthwhile?"

On the other hand, it is sometimes beneficial to try to analyze situations in which we have felt that perhaps we did little good for the teacher. I would like to describe one such experience which happened to me. It may serve to help a teacher or a teacher educator to meet a problem and cope with it more satisfactorily than I did on this occasion.

I went out to visit a young first-year teacher of vocational agriculture. I had worked with him as a student at college and had supervised his student teaching work. I had felt that he was a promising young teacher. The boys in the student teaching center liked him. He had a very nice personality and gave every evidence of becoming an excellent teacher. He had entered with enthusiasm into the work with adult farmer classes and we felt that teaching of adult farmer and young farmer classes would be a strong part of his program when he began teaching in his own department.

When I called at the school I inquired of the superintendent, "How is Frank getting along?"

The superintendent said, "He seems to be getting along very well. We think he is going to make a very good teacher."

"Is he getting out to visit his students on their farms?" I asked.

"Well, no he isn't," replied the superintendent. "That seems to be one of his weaknesses. He was around here all summer and he didn't see half of his students. I even offered to go with him and he didn't take me up on that. I thought I could help him get acquainted a little. You know an agriculture man is a very important person to the superintendent. His public relations responsibilities are tremendous."

I agreed and then I asked some additional questions. Finally I said, "What kind of a schedule do you have for Frank?"

"He has two agriculture classes and three study halls," was the reply.

I said, "Boy! You mean you have your agriculture man scheduled for study hall three hours every day? Isn't that too expensive? Does he have any adult-farmer classes?"

"Yes, it is too expensive to have him in the study hall, but he didn't want to teach adult classes and we had to give him something to do. When we hired him, we expected he would make his contacts and start some adult and young-farmer classes this year. The reason I wrote you and asked you to come as soon as possible was the hope that you could do something for this boy. He has so many good qualities that it seems to me we ought to try to save him as a teacher."

I went on to the agriculture room and arrived as the first class was coming into the room. The boys were not bad, but there were evidences of little respect for the program and for the teacher.

Frank greeted me warmly, as was his habit, and then called the class to order. He announced that they would have a movie today. (The projector was set up when I arrived.)

No further statement was made. One of the students started the machine and the movie ran through. For the most part the students paid no attention to the picture but their behavior otherwise was passive.

After the class was over, Frank said, "This period I have study hall. Would you like to come in?"

I said, "Yes, I'd be glad to."

We went back to the agriculture room after the study hall period and Frank asked a student to run the movie for this class too. At the close of the class, Frank said, "You're going home with us for lunch. My wife is planning on it."

I said, "You mean your wife invited me to lunch when you both are teaching? I should think she'd be too busy to have guests at lunch."

Frank answered, "Oh, that's okay. You'll have to take just what we have, but we want you to come."

Frank's wife arrived from her homemaking classroom and we went to their apartment. It was attractive, nicely decorated and well kept.

After lunch I began to question Frank about his program hoping to find out what problems he had and to try to help him solve them. I said, "That was quite an interesting movie you had this morning. How did it fit in with the units you are studying?"

"Oh, it didn't," replied Frank. "I just saw it listed and thought the boys would like to see it so I ordered it."

"Wouldn't it be better to plan for movies so they would fit into your instructional program?" I asked.

"Yes, I think it would, but it's hard to do so I gave up."

I inquired about the adult-farmer classes by asking, "Frank, wouldn't the superintendent relieve you of one of those study halls if you taught an adult class?"

"Yes, I suppose he would, but I'm not going to teach one. I know he wants me to, but I'll resign first," was Frank's reply.

We had a long conversation following these questions. We talked about Frank's success in the training center as a student teacher, about his experiences with adult-farmer classes, and about his planning and teaching units of work. I tried to get Frank to compare the work he had done in the training center with the work he had demonstrated to me.

He agreed with my analysis but he never once asked for a suggestion nor did he make a remark to indicate that he would try to improve his program.

Subsequent visits have been of the same pattern--movies, courtesy, no positive evidence of a desire to improve.

* * * *

Can you point out where I may have failed?

Do you think Frank was interested in helping boys learn more about agriculture? Why?

What would you think could be done to help Frank to improve his program?

TWO FIRST-YEAR TEACHERS

I have just come from conducting a class of pre-service teachers of vocational agriculture. The topic for discussion had to do with "relationships" and it was broken down to include relationships of the itinerant teacher trainer and relationships of the state supervisor, to the teacher.

One of the students asked, "What is the function of a teacher trainer when he visits a teacher in a school? Should we try to cover up or should we try to get some help out of him?"

After my students had discussed these questions for a time I said, "Let me tell you about two beginning teachers I worked with the last time I worked on in-service training. I think it might help answer some of your questions. But first I want to say one thing very emphatically, the function of the teacher trainer is to be helpful, not to be destructive.

"Here's the story of my two teachers. When I visited the first man I found him with 100 students enrolled in his agriculture classes. He was terribly busy yet he wanted to do more. In preparation for my visit, he had written down a long list of questions and problems which he wanted to discuss with me. We worked on them during the lunch hour and in the car while we went out to visit some boys on their farming programs after school. After dinner he came up to my hotel room and we worked far into the night.

"I had asked the superintendent about this teacher and he had said, 'He's the finest teacher I've hired in many years. He is growing all the time and our biggest worry is that we won't be able to keep him. As soon

as he gets some experience, some teacher training institution will be after him. Anyway we'll have a good program as long as he stays.'

"The other teacher was a young man whom we felt was equally capable when he was a student teacher. When I went to his school the first time I asked, 'How are you getting along?'

"'Just fine,' was his reply.

"I asked about his program and found that he had a very low enrollment in his classes. I asked about his farm visits and he said, 'I haven't had time to get around yet.'

"'You've been on the job since the first of July, haven't you?' I asked.

"'Yes, but I haven't had enough time,' he replied. This was in November.

"'Do you have any adult-farmer or young-farmer classes?' I asked.

"'No, the farmers around here aren't interested,' he replied.

"When the first class began, the teacher explained, 'I've got this movie that came last night. I haven't seen it myself but we'll run it today.'

"The movie lasted until the end of the class period and the second class came in. As the class was gathering the teacher said, 'As long as the movie is here, I might as well run it for them too.'

"After all the classes had seen the same movie and I had a chance, I asked, 'What relation did this movie have to the units of instruction you had underway?'

"His answer was vague, 'Well maybe we'll be studying farm machinery someday so I thought I'd run it. It didn't relate to anything we've been doing.'

"I next asked, 'I wonder if you have any questions or problems you'd like to work on with me while I'm here?'

"'Nope, I guess not,' was his reply.

"I had planned to visit each of these men a second time during the year. On my second visit to the first teacher, I found that he had made the same kind of a plan for my visit. The only difference was that I was scheduled to stay in town two nights. He found out that I was to be in town the night before my scheduled visit, so we spent two evenings going over his plans and questions.

"The visit of the second teacher was the same as the first. He ran movies with no relation to an instructional program or to current subject matter under consideration in his classes.

"Soon after this second visit, the superintendent called me by phone and said, 'We want you to make a third visit. We've got to get this teacher straightened out or the board will fire him.'

"I went back to visit again and saw more movies. On each of the visits I had done plenty of talking, but there had been no desire to discuss problems and I had failed to help the teacher."

* * * *

Do you believe the methods used by these teachers to get help from the teacher trainer help to illustrate good and poor ways of using the teacher trainer?

What do you believe I might have done to help the second teacher?

How might he have done more to help himself?